

GAO

Secretarial/Clerical Council



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

In 1981, director-level secretaries formed an ad hoc group to improve communications between management and the secretarial/clerical staff. Largely through their efforts, the Secretarial/Clerical Council was officially chartered in 1982.

The Council acts as a conduit for ideas between the secretarial/clerical community and management. This open line of communication has resulted in an improved work environment, more efficient procedures, more uniform policies, and a better understanding of both groups' concerns.

Representatives are elected from divisions, offices, and regional offices. Their staggered 2-year terms insure continuation of ongoing work.

Advisory councils serve a vital purpose. The interaction between council and management can be very enlightening for both parties, especially where program planning is involved. First and foremost in the planning of any program should be the identification of the needs of the community directly effected and how they can be best satisfied. In order to accomplish this, it is vital that input be received from, the community itself. When this process is not followed the end result is a program without focus.

Last year, the Council became involved in several Office programs. Committees concentrating in specific areas were able to make significant contributions in a number of respects. This annual report documents these accomplishments.

CHAPTER 2

APPRAISAL AND PERSONNEL SYSTEMS COMMITTEE

One of the main objectives of the Secretarial/Clerical Council has been involvement in the earliest stages of planning programs that will affect the secretarial/clerical community. This committee has provided input on several programs relating to personnel matters.

OBJECTIVE: Work on Personnel Appeals Board Screening Panel.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- A representative participated in the selection of two new Personnel Appeals Board members.

OBJECTIVES: Monitor GAO's formulation of a Reduction-In-Force plan.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Due to budget constraints and ~~Graham~~-Ruddman-Hollings budget cuts, GAO was faced with the reality of a possible Reduction-In-Force (RIF). As a result, Personnel had to formulate a RIF plan. Committee members attended two meetings that discussed GAO's RIF plan and its' implementation.
- In an effort to save money and possibly avert the activation of the RIF plan, the Council decided not to hold an Annual Meeting in the regions.

OBJECTIVES: Assist in the development of personnel systems beneficial to the secretarial/clerical staff.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- We met with Nina Kettering, OOHD, who was assigned the task of assessing the kind of career assistance services currently available at GAO. On the bases of comments received from various sources, a plan to improve and expand the services should be available in spring.
- We met with Judy England-Joseph to discuss initiating programs geared towards enhancing secretarial/clerical job satisfaction and thereby improve the retention rate of experienced staff.
- We suggested that the Office of Organization and Human Development (OOHD) update its publication GAO Career

Information Guide. Subsequently met with Linda Hawkins,
OOHD, to discuss the best way to present this information.

RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES FOR 1987:

- Urge increased participation of secretarial/clerical staff on awards panels.
- Review type of drug testing program, if any, GAO proposes.
- Stress need for establishing critical job elements at the beginning of the rating period and for holding mid-term conferences on performance appraisals.
- Monitor program focusing on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome and the workplace.
- Provide information on the Civil Service Retirement System and the Federal Employee Retirement System.
- Provide information on the Thrift Plan and how to join it.

CHAPTER 3

PROCUREMENT AND PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

This committee works with management to improve the Office's daily operations. By concentrating on improving delivery of supplies, identifying defective supplies, and reviewing and updating publications, this committee ensures the improvement of current work processes within GAO.

OBJECTIVE: Continue monitoring the quality and availability of supplies at headquarters and at the regions.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

-- This type of monitoring is an ongoing project. GAO will change brands and suppliers if there are sufficient complaints and defective supplies are returned. Defective supplies should be saved and returned to the Office of Facilities and Property Management. Letters of complaint should also be sent to this office, with copies sent to area supervisors.

OBJECTIVE: Find a more contemporary replacement for the Government Printing Office Word Division Supplement.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

-- With the issuance of the GAO Style Manual, the 1982 edition of the Government Printing Office Word Division Supplement, which GAO had in stock, quickly became outdated. The committee tried to get a publication that was more compatible with the new GAO style. Webster publishes a word division book, and the committee requested the Office of Acquisition Management to purchase some as a likely replacement. However, due to the cost of procuring this book for Office-wide use, it was decided a more appropriate replacement would be the current edition of the Word Division Supplement. If you have an outdated edition, you can order a new one from the GAO Storeroom.

OBJECTIVE: Comment on the proposed draft of the GAO Operations Manual Supplement for Secretaries and Typists, and aid in distribution when it is finalized.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

-- A panel consisting of Council members from various committees reviewed and commented on the operations supplement. The Council has been working closely with Wanda Scales of the Records Management Branch to ensure that this

product is clear and concise. Due to the length of time since the last update, the committee wanted to ensure that all pertinent information was covered. The supplement will be issued in the summer.

MISCELLANEOUS:

- In July, the committee inquired about GAO's new filing system. This system will be mandatory throughout GAO and should simplify filing. The new guidelines and training on this system will be available soon.

RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES FOR 1987:

- Aid in informing staff of the availability of the Operations Manual Supplement.
- Review and comment on the Workstation Handbook, which is a guide for personal computer users at GAO. For more information, see the Word Processing Technology Committee section of this annual report.

CHAPTER 4

RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

Recruitment of secretarial/clerical employees has become an increasing challenge due, in part, to increased demand and competition. This committee has been working with Personnel to help ensure the hiring and recruiting of high-quality secretarial/clerical staff through a variety of methods.

OBJECTIVES: Ensure that the secretarial community stays involved in recruiting and hiring secretarial/clerical staff; continue to provide assistance to GAO's recruitment program.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- On June 11, 1986, Grace Schmitt, Personnel, briefed the Council on the National Recruitment Program. She said that
- 1) 16 secretaries were serving as recruiters;
 - 2) vacant secretarial positions have increased, but there are not enough qualified people to fill the positions;
 - 3) recruiters hope to attract more applicants by giving speeches, on-site testing, career fairs, and placing ads in newspapers; and
 - 4) recruiting was being done at colleges and universities.

OBJECTIVES: Request that Developmental and Temporary Assignment Group give periodic briefings to the Council on the success of secretarial/clerical hiring and the success of the entry-level training program.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Daphne Atkinson, OOH, gave several briefings to the Council regarding the status and procedures of the entry-level training program. At the briefing held June 11, 1986, Ms. Atkinson explained the screening process for grades GS-2 through GS-5. She also informed the Council about the temporary services available through OOH.

OBJECTIVES: Establish a Secretarial/Clerical Career Fair for interested persons from the Washington Metropolitan area.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- During the June 11 meeting, the Council asked Ms. Schmitt to look into the possibility of having a Career Fair.
- The Council assisted in the planning and coordination of the first Secretarial/Clerical Career Fair held at GAO, September 15, 1986. Council members also performed various tasks the day of the Fair, such as greeting potential applicants, briefing applicants about GAO, and scheduling interviews.

RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES FOR 1987:

- Request that the recruitment grade levels be raised.
- Ensure that the secretarial/community stays actively involved in recruitment.
- Request briefings on Personnel's recruitment programs.
- Assist in planning and coordinating future Career Fairs.

CHAPTER 5

TRAINING COMMITTEE

The Council believes training is vital to the efficient running of the Office. Training is a fundamental aspect of keeping the workforce in touch with the latest methods used in the workplace. Training can also be a valuable tool for self-enrichment and career advancement. This committee works in conjunction with the Office of Organization and Human Development (OOHD) to encourage employees to register for and attend classes and to suggest areas where new classes are needed.

OBJECTIVE: Monitor OOHD's efforts toward revising its publication GAO Career information Guide, which details possible career paths and suggest that career path information be made more readily available.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- Howard Johnson, OOHD, informed the Council that OOHD has started to revise the Career Information Guide. Linda Hawkins is currently working on the Guide, which will identify career paths available to secretarial/clerical staff.
- With the Council's encouragement, OOHD published career path information in the Management News and the Upward Mobility Program Handbook. A notice was also placed on the display board in Personnel.

OBJECTIVE: Monitor OOHD's efforts to streamline its instructor training program to facilitate better retention of techniques learned and allow more individuals to attend instructor training classes.

ACCOMPLISHMENT:

- OOHD has consolidated some of the past session, and has suggested that the secretarial community continue to work with management to gain cooperation and support for training programs, especially when release time for attending training is necessary.

OBJECTIVE: Continue to work with OOHD to establish upper-level training for secretaries.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The committee reviewed a list of upcoming courses submitted by Lynn Ernst, OOHD, and suggested ideas for new courses.

OBJECTIVE: Coordinate with OOHD to obtain instructors for various courses and provide suggestions for possible courses.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- In March 1986, the Council received a memo from Lyn Weeks, OOHD, regarding instructor training programs. She suggested that the secretarial staff continue to work with managers to gain support for building training programs for secretaries.
- In June 1986, Elizabeth Lattimore briefed the Council on OOHD's effort to present secretarial courses. OOHD has arranged for instructors for several in-house secretarial/clerical courses.
- The Council participated on the panel that awarded the contract for teaching the secretarial/clerical curriculum at GAO.
- In August 1986, Lynn Ernst and Carla Washington, OOHD, gave the committee a list of courses scheduled for Spring 1987.

OBJECTIVE: Request report from the Training Branch on the disposition of the evaluation sheets collected at the end of training courses.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- At the end of training courses, evaluation sheets are distributed that ask participants to rate course content and the instructor. OOHD was asked how this information is used. The committee was informed that the evaluation sheets are computerized. A print-out of the course rating can be requested from OOHD. The information is used to make decisions about whether to revise course content/structure or to take the course off-line. A new form has been designed that is shorter and takes less time to complete.

OBJECTIVE: Ensure all secretarial/clerical courses reflect the new GAO style.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- OOHD has self-paced packages that are available for the Regions. These packages can be obtained by contacting GAO's Learning Center.
- Elizabeth Lattimore, OOHD, visited and spoke with the lead secretaries in the regions and found that only two regions administered the Secretarial Procedures and Proofreading

courses to their staffs. These courses are currently off-line while they are revised to include information from the GAO Operations Manual Supplement for Secretaries and Typists.

RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES FOR 1987:

- Monitor OOHD's efforts to publish a newly revised publication illustrating career paths available to secretarial/clerical staff.
- Encourage secretarial/clerical participation in courses offered, as both instructors and attendants.

CHAPTER 6

WORD PROCESSING TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

The agency is currently undergoing a change in the type of word processing technology it uses. The Council has asked this committee to ensure that the concerns of personal computer users are understood and addressed.

OBJECTIVES: Work closely with the MICOM to Personal Computer Conversion Task Force to help ensure a smooth conversion.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

-- Representative provided the Task Force with input on various issues of concern to secretarial/clerical employees using MICOMS and personal computers. These issues include the following:

- 1) Arranging placement of equipment to coincide with training.
- 2) Making sure training is GAO style-specific.
- 3) Adapting software so that it is "user-friendly."
- 4) Designing ergonomic workstations to ease discomfort and stress.
- 5) Establishing a support system for personal computer users.

OBJECTIVE: Together with the training committee, monitor OOHD's comprehensive training program related to WordPerfect the word processing package currently used on the personal computer.

ACCOMPLISHMENT:

-- A committee representative attended the 2-day pilot course on WordPerfect. Feedback included suggestions that the course be extended, that advanced courses be offered separately, and that follow-up user support be made available.

OBJECTIVE: Finalize and distribute Video Display Terminal survey. Obtain data results and determine what steps, if any, should be taken.

ACCOMPLISHMENT:

- Survey was distributed to secretarial/clerical staff. On the basis of results, suggestions have been made to the Conversion Task Force on improving work conditions of personal computer users.
- Suggestions on what ergonomic equipment to purchase, and how to arrange the workstations, were given to Debbie Garver, IMTEC, who is setting up a new report processing center.

OBJECTIVE: Assist in the development of a WordPerfect user manual.

ACCOMPLISHMENT:

- The General Government Division wrote the GAO Guide for MICOM Operators, which was an instructional manual for MICOM users. With the advent of a new word processing package, the Council requested a similar manual that would aid the user. Working with the Office of Information Resources Management, committee representatives instigated and helped formulate and implement this project. The final product, Workstation Handbook, was issued in early Spring.

ADDITIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- The committee assisted in the testing of new equipment configurations. It also made suggestions as to what software should be available on the secretarial workstations.
- The committee maintains a vertical file in the Technical Library that contains articles on Electronic Work Stations.
- In March 1986, the committee consulted with Juanita Leake and Norma Stapleson of the Records Management Staff concerning forms and whether they would be available for use with the personal computers. Ms. Stapleson stated that work was being done to transfer the forms onto disks programmed in WordPerfect.
- The committee helped develop a follow-up support group for users of WordPerfect called WordPerfect Advisors. Advisors will be chosen Office-wide and will be available to aid users with problems encountered while using WordPerfect.

RECOMMENDED OBJECTIVES FOR 1987:

- Help facilitate GAO's transition from MICOM to personal computers.

- Ensure that personal computer users' concerns are addressed.
- Monitor Accounting Financial Management Divisions' office modernization project.
- Help inform the secretarial/clerical staff about the availability of WordPerfect user assistance.

Council RepresentativesHeadquarters

Allen, Lessie	CRO
Baker, Susan	NSIAD
Baylor, Jennifer	HRD
Bazemore, Brenda	HRD
Block, Eleanor	AFMD
Britton, Audrey	OIE
Davis, Darlene	IMTEC
DiPalma, Tyra	NSIAD
Fletcher, Patricia	OP
Francis, Victoria	GS&C
Gabrielli, Adele	OPI
Garver, Debbie	AFMD
Gatewood, Gloria	AFMD
Hooks, Glenda	OCR
Kushner, Iris	PSDP
Lee Leverne	PERSONNEL
Lilly, Jackie	RCED
McNorial, Gwen	OQA
Moron, Diana	OCR
Rosato, Ramona	RCED
Raynor, Janice	OOHD
Slushner, Jennifer	AFMD
Washington, Wanda	PEMD
West, Tina	GGD

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ATLANTA	Llorente, Carolyn
BOSTON	Hunter, Denise
CHICAGO	Williams, Lakle
CINCINNATI	Johnson, Sue
DALLAS	Boyles, Patti
DENVER	Deischer, Barbara
DETROIT	Lyons, May
KANSAS CITY	Meek, Mary
LOS ANGELES	Tiscareno, Roman
NEW YORK	Smalls, Mary
NORFOLK	Lindbland, Gerri
PHILADELPHIA	Wyrauch, Alice
SAN FRANCISCO	Green, Lovette
SEATTLE	Everett, Sandy
WASHINGTON	Hay, Titina

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

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VICE CHAIR: Titina Hay

COUNCIL LIAISON: Norma Samuel

SECRETARY: Levester Nichols

ALTERNATE SECRETARY: Darlene Davis

AREA REPRESENTATIVES: Titina Hay, East Coast
 Mary Jane Meek, Central Area
 Roman Tiscareno, West Coast

COMMITTEES

EWS

Lisa Connolly, Chair
Wanda Washington
Tina West

PROCUREMENT/PUBLICATIONS

Lessie Allen, Chair
Janice Raynor

PERSONNEL/APPRAISALS

Tyra DiPalma, Chair
Adele Gabrielli
Irs Kushner

TRAINING

Jackie Lilly, Chair
Eleanor Block
Nancy Rollins
Gloria Gatewood

RECRUITMENT

Debbie Garver, Chair
Patricia Fletcher
Laverne Lee
Ramona Rosato

1986
SECRETARIAL/CLERICAL COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES



Seated L to R: Norma Samuels, Adele Gabrielli, Titina Hay

1st Row L to R: Glenda Hooks, Violet Simmons, Jeanne Fox,
Donna Tebeau, Gerrie Richardson,
Jessie Battle, Terri Poppey

2nd Row L to R: Levester Nichols, Shirly Purnell,
Julia Allison, Marie Walburn, Ann Rollison,
Lou Bagley, Sandy McDonald,
Cecelia Niemi, Roman Tiscareno